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111842Z Mar 04

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000225

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR - MSEIBEL, HAITI MONITORING TASK FORCE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SURINAME: NO LIKELY HUMANITARIAN AID FOR HAITI

REF: STATE 52611

PER REFTTEL, THE EMBASSY MET WITH TERENCE CRAIG, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AMERICAS DIVISION HEAD, ON MARCH 11 TO CONVEY THE U.S. CALL TO INTERNATIONALIZE HUMANITARIAN AID FOR HAITI. AS EXPECTED, CRAIG REFRAINED FROM PROVIDING A RESPONSE ON THE MATTER; HE EXPLAINED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS NOT DISCUSSED ITS POLICY TOWARD HAITI IN GREAT DETAIL AS IT HAS BEEN CONSUMED BY OTHER MATTERS -- GUYANA'S RECENT DECISION TO TAKE SURINAME TO COURT OVER THE ONGOING MARITIME BORDER DISPUTE, THE RECENT STATE VISIT BY PRESIDENT VENETIAAN TO CHINA, AND PREPARATIONS FOR BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT LULA'S UPCOMING VISIT TO SURINAME. TO ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT, CRAIG NOTED THAT SURINAME WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE MARCH 3-4 CARICOM EMERGENCY MEETING IN JAMAICA TO DISCUSS THE HAITI SITUATION. STILL, CRAIG INDICATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT FACES FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AND WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO OFFER FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO HAITIAN REFUGEES, BUT DID NOT SPECULATE ON WHAT OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE SURINAME COULD OFFER AT THIS TIME. HE PROMISED TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF SURINAME'S RESPONSE TO THE U.S. CALL TO INTERNATIONALIZE HUMANITARIAN AID FOR HAITI AT A LATER DATE.

FAUCHER

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